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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TAIPEI 002122

SIPDIS

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SUBJECT: BEIJING BLOCKING TAIWAN EFFORTS TO REPATRIATE PRC CITIZENS

REF: BEIJING 6436

[11.](#) (SBU) Summary. PRC reluctance to accept back its own citizens detained in Taiwan as illegal immigrants, including many TIP victims, creates unnecessary hardship for both groups and a heavy financial burden on the Taiwan government. Contrary to claims by Beijing authorities (reftel) that the PRC cooperates with other governments in repatriating its citizens, Taiwan's Bureau of Immigration reports that there are hundreds of Chinese illegal immigrants who have been waiting for long periods to return to the PRC, many for more than one, some more than two years. End summary.

[12.](#) (SBU) Statistics provided by the Taiwan Bureau of Immigration show that of the 922 female PRC illegal immigrants currently in detention at the Hsinchu Detention Center, 404 have been waiting for more than 6 months, 407 for 1-2 years, and 11 for more than 2 years. (Note: AIT interviewed two PRC trafficking victims in early April, one of whom was 15 years old and had been waiting over 18 months and the other victim who had been waiting over two years to be accepted back by the PRC. End note). The Taiwan Red Cross calculates the average time for the 2240 total number of male and female PRC detainees in Taiwan waiting to be returned to Mainland China is nine months.

[13.](#) (SBU) This is in sharp contrast to illegal immigrants from Southeast Asian countries, which often accept the return of their citizens within days of being apprehended by Taiwan authorities. The National Police Administration told AIT that all illegal immigrants in Taiwan must be repatriated within 15 days according to Taiwan immigration law. For non-PRC illegal immigrants, the length of stay depends on how quickly they obtain travel documents to return home, ranging from a few days to a week.

[14.](#) (SBU) The Red Cross serves as the intermediary between Taipei and Beijing in the repatriation process. Taiwan has developed a repatriation system based on prioritization, with trafficking victims, pregnant women, and those requiring medical attention placed at the top of the list. All other PRC illegal immigrants are placed on the repatriation list according to the date they first entered Taiwanese detention centers. The Taiwan Red Cross submits a list of PRC detainees to the PRC Red Cross for transmittal to authorities in Beijing. Beijing officials then review the list and verify the identification information provided on the immigrants. The list is then returned to Taiwanese authorities but is typically altered with some PRC citizens refused repatriation with no explanation given for the decision. Taiwan has no recourse to appeal the PRC government's refusal to accept some of the immigrants.

[15.](#) (SBU) The PRC Red Cross sets a date for the repatriation from Taiwan once permission from Beijing is obtained. There is no consistent system for repatriation dates since Beijing must provide authorization to the Red Cross before dates can be allocated. Statistics from the Taiwan Red Cross show that illegal immigrants are usually repatriated monthly but that there are sometimes long periods with no repatriations such as February to August 2004 and October to December 2004. Taiwan authorities told AIT that this uneven timing of repatriation dates reflects Beijing's assessment of the state of political relations between Beijing and Taipei. When Beijing sees positive developments in cross-strait relations, cooperation improves and repatriations increase.

[16.](#) (SBU) Taiwan Immigration Bureau statistics report that there are currently 2240 illegal immigrants from the PRC waiting to be repatriated. The following number of PRC illegal immigrants were detained and repatriated from 2002 to 2005:

2002: 2032 detained, 1402 returned in 9 repatriations

2003: 3458 detained, 2237 returned in 14 repatriations

2004: 1783 detained, 1440 returned in 9 repatriations

2005: 375 detained (through March), 850 returned in 5

repatriations (through April)

17. (SBU) Taiwan government officials told AIT that they wish to repatriate illegal immigrants back to the PRC as soon as possible and are deeply frustrated by Beijing's delays and frequent passing over of certain illegal immigrants for no reason. Taiwan immigration officials and the Taiwan Red Cross, however, added that once PRC immigrants are returned to the Mainland, many face additional hardships such as stiff monetary fines or measures taken against their families for their attempt to leave the PRC.

18. (SBU) Comment. Beijing's refusal to accept the return of its citizens in a timely manner from Taiwan goes beyond politics to become a question of human rights. While Beijing has accepted on average approximately 11 repatriations per year since 2002, the erratic timing of the repatriations and the high number of PRC illegal immigrants detained combined with Beijing's refusal to accept all immigrants submitted for repatriation has resulted in hardships for the illegal immigrants who are forced to languish in overcrowded detention centers. Many of the PRC women detained as illegal immigrants are determined to be TIP victims and placed in a separate facility. Most wish to return home to the Mainland as soon as possible, but are not permitted to do so by Beijing. The delay in repatriating the PRC's TIP victims has unfairly tarnished Taipei's international reputation for its performance in dealing with the issue of trafficking in persons. Moreover, the Taiwan government must house and feed the large numbers of illegal immigrants and TIP victims at considerable expense. AIT believes that Beijing authorities should be encouraged to accept the return of all PRC citizens and do so without conditions so that Taiwan does not have to unfairly bear the brunt of Beijing's delays. End comment.
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